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**ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT JUSTICE PHILIP J. RARICK TO ADDRESS NEW
SIU LAW STUDENTS ON CIVILITY AND PROFESSIONALISM**

Justice Philip J. Rarick of the Illinois Supreme Court will address and administer an oath of professionalism to incoming law students at Southern Illinois University on Friday, October 1. This will take place at the Carbondale Civic Center, located at 200 S. Illinois Avenue, starting at 6 p.m.

Since August 18 and as part of a continuing program of the Special Supreme Court Committee on Professionalism, justices of the Illinois Supreme Court have attended orientation sessions at all law schools in the state and administered to the incoming students an oath of professionalism. The orientation program involving the justices got underway with last year's incoming law school classes.

In August, Chief Justice Mary Ann G. McMorrow, Justices Charles E. Freeman, Thomas R. Fitzgerald, Robert R. Thomas, Thomas L. Kilbride and Rita B. Garman each participated at various law schools statewide.

The idea behind the pledge and the workshops on professionalism grew out of a belief among justices of the Supreme Court that one of the most effective ways of improving professionalism among lawyers is to begin at the earliest steps with students and new lawyers.

"Following SIU's example, the committee ultimately determined that one of the ways to achieve its goal was to introduce the concepts of respectful conduct, including courtesy, integrity, honest, to first-year law students," Justice Rarick said.

"The goal of this program is not to teach the difference between right and wrong, but to help understand that the standards for differentiating between what is right and wrong, what is courteous and ill-mannered, what has integrity and what does not, do not change when one attains the right to appear in court as an attorney and counselor at law. The license to practice law is not a license to forfeit moral responsibility. To the contrary, it is a charge to obey the highest standards of conduct on behalf of clients in the interest of justice," Justice Rarick said.

Justice Robert R. Thomas initiated the idea of the committee among his colleagues and serves as Supreme Court liaison with the Committee.

"You hear a lot about how the practice of law is different now than in days past when a lawyer's handshake meant something and a lawyer's word was his bond," said Justice Thomas.

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“That may be an oversimplification. But in this day and age with competition in the profession for dollars and clients, activities sometimes degenerate into a Rambo-style, win-at-all cost attitude by attorneys.”

Justice Rarick said the goal is not an easy one for the new students.

"When you are battling in court, the stakes can be high: a human life, a family's fortune, the future of a business on whose survival the welfare of an entire community may depend. The stress of the conflict may and will tempt you to behavior you would never exhibit elsewhere. While such conduct may help win a case in the short run, the long run consequences are detrimental to you, your future clients, and the profession as a whole.

"Remember: you will not practice in a vacuum," Justice Rarick said to the students in prepared remarks. "The lawyers and judges you face today you will surely face again in the future. Over time, they will know if you are honest, they will know if they can depend on your work, they will know if you are someone with whom meaningful negotiations can be conducted. If you are impossible to deal with, if you are thought to be dishonest, you will inevitably find yourself unwelcome at the courthouse and derided by your community."

David F. Rolewick, chairman of the committee and a Wheaton-based attorney, also welcomed the opportunity to introduce new law students to the issues of professionalism and civility.

“The most important thing a lawyer has is his reputation, his ability to be trusted as an individual,” Mr. Rolewick said. “If we don’t start teaching that in the first year of law school, we lose a tremendous opportunity. The Supreme Court understands the importance of this and has pushed this idea very hard. It asked us to begin the education program on professionalism for law students as soon as we could.”

During the past year, the Supreme Court Committee held a series of town hall meetings statewide with attorneys, judges and community representatives examining the need for professionalism and ways to achieve it.

“Professional conduct should not be the minimum acceptable behavior which complies with the formal disciplinary rules,” Chief Justice McMorrow said. “It should be aspirational conduct that will lift the profession in the eyes of the public, our colleagues and ourselves. True professionalism is a lofty, yet I believe reasonable and necessary standard for all of us as lawyers.”

The Special Supreme Court Committee on Professionalism was established by the Court in November, 2001.